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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
13 January 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Intelligence)
SUBJECT: Japanese Election Prospects

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The official campaign for the Japanese lower house election tentatively scheduled for 27 February will not get under way until the Diet dissolves on 24 January. The American embassy in Tokyo at the present time, however, predicts the ex-Yoshida Liberals, Hatoyama's Japan Democrats, and the combined Socialist parties are likely to win about the same number of seats. This would mean in the neighborhood of 150 seats for each. No single party appears to have much chance for a majority.

Predictions of prominent politicians are:

(a) Shinsuke Kishi, Secretary General Japan Democrats, has predicted publicly his party would win from 230 to 240 seats; privately he has claimed 180 to 200 for the Japan Democrats; 100 for the Liberals and about 154 for the Left and Right Socialists.

(b) Hayato Ikeda of the Liberal Party privately predicted the Japan Democrats and Liberals would win 150 seats each, the Socialists 160 and the Communists "a few."

(c) Jotaro Kawakani of the Right Socialists publicly predicts the Socialists will get 160 seats.

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Numerous prominent conservatives are exaggerating the threat from the left, in an effort to gain American financial support and American expression of approval for their party, which would improve their chances. They have not indicated, however, any pre-election intention to resolve the intraconservative fight for power which led to the election and is continuing source of their weakness.

State Dept. review completed

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The Japan Communist Party is talking a big campaign and apparently intends to run prominent overt leaders such as former central committeemen Kasuga and Matsumoto 25X1

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The present OCI view is that the conservatives will win a majority. The traditional advantage of the government party, plus the popularity of their program, will give the Japan Democrats the edge over their conservative rivals, the Liberals. We believe they will win from 170 to 190 seats while the Liberals may get from 120 to 150.

We believe that the present political climate of neutralism will help the Socialists and that they will win from 150-160 seats. Socialist gains will be limited by the following factors: (a) the consistent conservative majority in all postwar elections (Socialist gains have been largely at the expense of the Communists); (b) the probability that the Socialist base of support (labor, intellectuals, students), has already reached its near-maximum; (c) the greater prominence of conservative candidates, and their superior financial resources.

Prime Minister Hatoyama, Foreign Minister Shigemitsu and Finance Minister Ichimada will probably emerge as the strongest Democratic candidates to head up a new Japanese government. Shigemitsu, wartime foreign minister and convicted war criminal, was president of the former Progressive Party and like Hatoyama has an overriding desire to become prime minister. Recently, however, Shigemitsu has primarily been a front man with little real organized following. Ichimada, relatively young for a leading Japanese politician, resigned his position as Governor of the Bank of Japan to take over the Finance Ministry. He only recently revealed his political affiliation and would be a leading candidate for the prime ministership if the Liberals and the Democrats can come up with some sort of plan for merging their parties. Odds on choice for Liberal Party nomination as prime minister is Taketora Ogata, former deputy prime minister and now president of the Liberal Party, who was hand-picked by Yoshida to take over the leadership of the Liberals.

Leading Socialist candidates include Mosaburo Suzuki and Jotaro Kawakami, chairmen of the Left and Right Socialist parties, respectively. Suzuki, a reformed Communist, has

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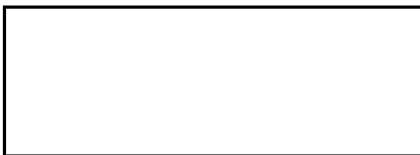
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espoused neutralism and at times pro-Communist viewpoints. Kawakami, on the other hand, takes a much more moderate position and favors alignment with the United States.

Two important Japanese Communist Party members who have announced their intention of running in the next election are Shoichi Kasuga and Saneki Matsumoto. Kasuga is head of the JCP's overt apparatus while Matsumoto was at one time an underground leader and a member of the central committee.

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